HOW TO BE A BETTER MUSLIM



AUTHOR



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Dedication

It is undoubtedly the Grace of Allāh ﷻ
and His Beloved Devotee, our Master,
the Leader of the Prophets, the Coolness
of our hearts and minds,
Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ,
that has enabled me to write this book.

I dedicate this book to my beloved
Murshid; my Guide and Inspiration,
Mufassir-e-Qurān, Shaykh-ul-Islām,
Hazrat 'Allāmah Sayyid Muhammad
Madanī Mīyān al-Ashrafīal-Jīlanī, may
Allāh protect him, and my beloved
father; al-Hāj Choudary Muhammad
Sādiq (Marhūm).



بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

وَالصَّلٰوةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلٰى رَسُوْلِ اللهِ

وَعَلٰى آلِهٖ وَاَصْحَابِهٖ اَجْمَعِيْنَ

Whoever revives one of my Sunnah then he has loved me.
And whoever loves me, will be with me in Paradise.

Jami` at-Tirmidhi

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Preface

Respectable readers, by the Grace and Will of Allāh ﷻ, as the title says, this book will be useful in encouraging Muslims – young and old, men and women, students and scholars – to become better Muslims. It will provide Muslims with a better and more comprehensive meaning of what it means to be a Muslim.

The primary purpose of writing this book is to guide and educate Muslims, to inspire as well as to warn them and remove the misconception that is often the belief of the layman that a Muslim is simply someone born in a Muslim family, or someone who just professes the shahādah (declaration of faith).

Many du'ās for my beloved wife: Umm Hayaat Nūr for her invaluable help and efforts. And for my learned friend; Mawlana Haider Ali, who reviewed and proofread this book, and for his invaluable suggestions, may Allāh ﷻ reward him abundantly.

I hope and supplicate to Allāh ﷻ to make this book a useful guide for all Muslims, or for anyone who is a seeker of the truth, and grant acceptance to this negligible effort, include it in my record of good deeds and to make it a means for my forgiveness.

Mohammad Naveed Ashrafī

Islām, Īmān and Submission

Firstly, I would like to explain the meaning of Islām as described by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in a Hadīth,

> *'(You) bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship besides Allāh and that Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allāh and (you) pray Salāh and pay Zakāh (obligatory charity) and (you) fast in (the whole of) Ramadān, and perform Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah) if you have the means or potential.'*

Similarly, the Holy Messenger ﷺ when asked about Faith (*Īmān*), said,

> *'That you believe in Allāh, His Angels, His Scriptures, His Messengers, and you believe in the Day of Judgement and in predestination; its good and its bad.'*[1]

In other words, Islām is reflected in our visible worship, such as Salāh, fasting and Zakāh. And Ī*mān* (faith) is the belief retained within the heart, namely to have a profound and firm belief in Allāh ﷻ and His Beloved Messenger ﷺ.

Therefore Islām and Ī*mān* combined are known as the *Dīn* (religion or complete way of Islamic life). In the books of *'Aqā'id* (beliefs), scholars have referred to Islām and Ī*mān*

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[1] Sahīh al-Muslim, Kitāb al-Īmān, Hadīth no. 1.

as one; this means every Muslim is a *Mu'min* (i.e. one who believes) and vice versa.

In reality, Islām is the consequent of Īmān.[2]

Therefore, a follower of Islām, after believing in it as his/her religion is known as a Muslim. Let us now examine the meaning of the word 'Muslim' as taken in the Qur'ān. In the Glorious Qur'ān it is stipulated,

> *'Recall, when his [Ibrāhīm's] Lord said to him, "Surrender (aslim)," He said 'I surrender to the Lord of the Worlds.' (2:131)*

It is therefore quite clear that the meaning of the word Muslim is 'to surrender,' 'to submit' and 'to totally give oneself up'. But to whom?

To the Almighty, our Creator, our Lord, our Provider, our Owner, ﷻ. And this act of submission must be complete, permanent and unconditional. Only then will one be able to attain the desired goal and prosperity, both in this world and in the hereafter.

Further, this act of surrendering to the Creator ﷻ means that each and every organ and limb of our body must surrender, both inwardly and outwardly, including our heart, mind, body and soul.

[2] Ash'at al-Īmān, I:38.

In another verse, Allāh ﷻ commands the Muslims,

> *'O believers, enter into the folds of Islām completely.' (2:208)*

This means that we are required to surrender ourselves completely and wholly. We thereby are making our eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, heart, mind and even our thoughts and imagination surrender to Allāh ﷻ. Or to word it differently, we are turning them into Muslims.

This means using them as our Creator ﷻ has commanded, and not as our desires or Satan dictates. Only then can it be true and complete submission, only then will we be true Muslims.

Otherwise, it is as though we are almost serving our desires (known as al-Nafs al-Ammārah), which invite us to the power of evils almost as a God. As proclaimed in the Qur'ān,

> *'Do you see the one who has taken his desire as his God?' (25:43)*

Only that part of our desire which does not command or incite towards sins can be obeyed. The reason is because we have surrendered ourselves to the will and choice of Allāh ﷻ and not to our carnal desire or Satan. Allāh ﷻ warns those people who blindly follow their desires and abandon guidance from Allāh ﷻ,

'And who is more astray, than the one who follows his desire and abandons Guidance from Allāh?' (28:50)

Conversely Allāh ﷻ promises an immense reward for those people who oppose their desire in order to obtain the pleasure of their Lord.

To simply profess the declaration of faith verbally without pondering over its meaning and hence failing to realise what one has said is insufficient. Being a Muslim entails a great deal more! The great scholar and poet of the East, Dr. 'Allāmah Īqbal famously said,

Zuban ne keh bhi diyaa laa ilaaha to kya haasil,
Dil o nighah musalmaan nahin to kuch bhi nahin.

You have achieved nothing by simply saying the declaration of faith just with the tongue.

If your heart and vision (eyes) are not Muslim, then nothing is!

In other words, one's conscience and vision should also profess the *Kalimah* (declaration of faith) alongside the tongue. Once they and all the rest of our organs and limbs have also professed the declaration of faith, then they have in other words made an assertion; that we give ourselves up to the commands of our Creator ﷻ.

They are claiming that they will now only use their organs as Allāh ﷻ wills and not as they will. We are not servants to our wants and desires, but servants of Allāh ﷻ.

Submission of the heart

The heart is the central organ of the body. The Holy Prophet ﷺ stipulated in a Hadīth,

'Beware, there is surely in the body a piece of flesh, when it functions correctly, then the entire body follows, and when it malfunctions, then the whole body will be in disorder. Listen carefully; it is the heart.'[3]

The heart is the key organ for the physical well-being of every person. Likewise, for the spiritual well-being of every person, it is imperative for the heart to be a 'Muslim', namely for it to surrender to the will of Allāh ﷻ.

People become afflicted with heart disease and then require medication. Likewise, by not truly and completely surrendering ourselves to the will of Allāh ﷻ, we become afflicted with spiritual diseases. It must be cared for spiritually through complete and permanent submission to Allāh ﷻ.

[3] Sahīh al-Bukhārī, volume 1, book 2, Hadīth no. 49.

It must be noted that the heart spiritually is not just the piece of flesh within our chests. Rather, it is our conscience and thoughts too.

They must all 'bow' to the laws of our Supreme Master, Allāh ﷻ, and only do what pleases Him. However in order to do just that and simultaneously refrain from what displeases Him, one must have the relevant knowledge. After all, remaining illiterate in the laws of Allāh ﷻ (Sharī'ah) and ignorance, is itself an act of disobedience on our part.

I will now endeavour to explain – in light of the Qur'ān and Sunnah – how each and every limb should surrender to Allāh ﷻ and thus be a 'Muslim', following and remaining steadfast on the *al-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm* (the Straight Path). The Islamic scholars have stipulated that the heart is like a reservoir and the ears, eyes and mouth are simply taps connected to it.

If the water in the reservoir is pure and clean, then accordingly the eyes, ears and tongue will also be pure and clean and fully functioning and obedient to Allāh ﷻ.

The Hadīth mentioned earlier also suggests this; that the heart is like a king with the rest of the body as subjects obeying their commander. So if the king is fair and just, so too will his servants and subjects. If the heart is clean and pure and functioning correctly by being obedient to Allāh ﷻ, so too will the rest of the body.

So respectable readers, it is hence essential for us to know how we can keep our hearts spiritually healthy and functioning properly, and thus a 'Muslim'.

Firstly, we must ensure that we provide it with both physical and spiritual food in order to keep it healthy. This food must of course be halāl (permissible according to Islām) as the great Shaykh, al-Ghawth al-A'zam 'Abdul-Qādir Jīlanī,may Allāh have mercy upon him, stated that harām food (unlawful and earned through unlawful means) will spiritually turn the heart into a dead corpse whereas eating halāl food will make it alive.

Thus the one who consumes harām food is like the living dead - they are spiritually dead in the eyes of Islām. And those who consume halāl are even alive in their graves!

Repeatedly in the Glorious Qur'ān, Allāh ﷻ commands us to consume only the halāl,

'O mankind, eat of what is in the earth, lawful and pure.' (2:68)

'O those who believe! Eat of pure things We have provided for you.' (2:172)

'And eat of the lawful pure things and keep fearing Allāh.' (5:88)

Furthermore, the heart can be nourished with spiritual food by engaging oneself in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ,

performing Salāh, reciting the Qur'ān, fasting in Ramadān, paying Zakāh and by always remembering our beloved Prophet ﷺ. However, all these deeds (*a'māl*) will only be acknowledged by Allāh ﷻ if one possesses correct beliefs, consistent with the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

This is the straight path (*al-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm*) for the heart.

And only that heart is a 'Muslim' which has correct beliefs - one subservient to the command of the Creator ﷻ and not one's own desires. It is thus important for the heart to not only believe in the necessities of Islām, but to believe in them correctly.

Today, almost fourteen centuries since the worldly departure of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, the Ummah, just as he stipulated in his prophecy, have divided into many sects. The Prophet ﷺ proclaimed;

> *'My Ummah (nation) will divide into seventy-three sects, all of them except one will be in the fire (of Hell). The Companions enquired, "Who is the (fortunate) one, O Messenger of Allāh (i.e. what is their description)?" He said, 'They will remain steadfast upon the path my Companions and myself are upon.'*[4]

Today, the only congregation which is steadfast upon the path of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his Companions are undoubtedly the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al Jamā'ah. Only their

[4] Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Hadīth no. 171.

beliefs are consistent with the Qur'ān, Sunnah and with Sharī'ah (Islamic Law).

Protecting the heart from kufr (disbelief) and misguidance

As I am discussing how the heart needs to be a 'Muslim', it is thus of paramount importance that our heart is kept clean and pure from obtaining and possessing impure beliefs. Occasionally, the impurity and filth is so extreme that it amounts to disbelief (*kufr*), as is the case of the beliefs of the Qādiyānīs, Wahhābīs, Deobandīs, Salafīs, Ghayr Muqallids, Khawārij and the so-called Ahl al-Hadīth.

One thing these groups have in common is that they deny and reject the greatness of the Prophet ﷺ. They fail to believe in him correctly, since they deny his merits, his magnificence, his exalted status, his extraordinary nature and his miraculous qualities that have been bestowed to him by his Creator, Allāh ﷻ.

It is equally important in order for one to preserve and protect the Īmān (faith) that we distance ourselves from all kinds of disbelief (*kufr*) and misguidance to ensure purification of the heart.

Hence, Allāh ﷻ in the Glorious Qur'ān has commanded Muslims to avoid being in the company of such people. This is because they have caused discomfort to Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ by adopting, promoting and propagating incorrect beliefs.

The Glorious Qur'ān states,

'Surely those who annoy Allāh and His Prophet, Allāh has cursed them in this world and in the hereafter and He has prepared for them a disgraceful punishment.' (33:57)

Further, Allāh ﷻ commands:

'After recollection, do not sit with the unjust people.' (6:68)

Allāh ﷻ also instructs the Muslims,

'And do not incline towards those who have done wrong or the Fire will touch you (too).' (11:113)

Similarly our Beloved Nabī ﷺ has instructed us to distance ourselves from the misguided (i.e. the other sects; the ones not on the path of the Ahl al-sunnah),

'Keep well away from them and keep them well away from yourselves, lest they misguide you, lest they throw you in fitnah (disagreement).'[5]

Numerous Hadīths have been stipulated by our Beloved Master ﷺ regarding this topic, which further emphasises its importance. Our pious predecessors; the illustrious Sahābah, the Ahl al-Bayt, (may Allāh be pleased with them) and the Awliyā' Allāh not only advocated this, but also strictly implemented this.

Imām Rabbānī Mujaddid Alfal-Thānī, Shaykh Ahmad Fārūqī Sirhindī,may Allāh have mercy upon him, states,

[5] Sahīh al-Muslim (Muqaddimah), Mirqāh, Kitāb al-Īmān, chapter al-I'tisām bi al-Sunnah.

'Know with certainty that the destruction of the company of an innovator (from deviant sects) exceeds the destruction of the company of a disbeliever.'[6] Also, Sayyidī A'lā Hadrat, Imām Ahmad Razā Khān, may Allāh have mercy upon him, has stated that one should remove these people from his life, just as he would remove a fly from his bowl of milk.[7]

Just as we strive to protect our bodies and clothing from filth, we are advised and instructed to protect our hearts and minds from filth also. In Sūrah al-Fātihah we supplicate to Allāh ﷻ to make us follow the path of the ones upon whom Allāh has bestowed His favours and to 'not follow the ones upon whom there is Allāh's wrath and nor the astray.' Likewise, in Du'ā' al-Qunūt we recite and believe that 'we leave those who disobey you (Allāh).'

If Islām is so protective about the welfare of our Īmān and actions, that it does not recommend us to freely associate with those Muslims who disobey Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ, then how can it permit us to associate and socialise with the misguided?!

This has been instructed to enable us to protect our Īmān (faith) and to ensure that it is free from every potential impurity and filth, including the filth of misguidance, as it will cause contamination and pollution to the 'pure heart' wherein the ultimate treasure is preserved; *Īmān*!

[6] Maktūbāt Imām Rabbānī, Volume 1, Letter 54.

[7] Fatāwā Ridawiyyah.

The Qur'anic experts have declared that the pure heart (*Qalb Saleem*) must remain free from everything except Allāh ﷻ; this is the ultimate purity and sincerity.

The Wahhābī sect

The Wahhābīs and Salafis are one of the major fitnahs (causes of mischief and misconstruction in Islām) to the faith of believers this century.

Their beliefs indicate that the Ahl al-Bayt (the Household of the Prophet ﷺ) and the Awliyā' Allāh (Friends of Allāh ﷻ) have no importance and are helpless. And apart from themselves all others are infidels, idol-worshippers or innovators.

They are people who follow the creed of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb Najdī.

These people possess incorrect and blasphemous beliefs pertaining to some of the Articles of Faith; they strive to lessen our Holy Prophet's ﷺ God-given status by distorting and misconstruing verses of the Glorious Qur'ān and misinterpreting Hadīths. For example, they claim the Holy Prophet ﷺ was an ordinary man (*Bashar*), that he has no knowledge of the unseen (*Ghayb*), he is not watchful over his Ummah (*Hāzir* and *Nāzir*) and so on.

With references, I will briefly highlight just some of their incorrect beliefs and their version of Islām that they propagate and promote:

The founder of the Wahhābī sect, Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb Najdī, stated[8] that, 'the tomb of the Holy Prophet ﷺ deserves to be demolished. If it is in my capacity, then I will demolish it.'

In the same book [9], he wrote:

> *'My walking stick is better than Muhammad ﷺ, as I can use it to kill a snake. As for Muhammad ﷺ, he is dead, he is no longer of any use or benefit.'*

Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's belief (*'Aqīdah*) was that all the people of the world including Muslims (except for himself and his followers) were *Mushriks* (idol worshippers) and *Kuffār* (non Muslims) and to kill them and wage war on them, to rob them of their wealth and property was permissible, lawful and in fact compulsory.[10]

The Wahhābīs further believe that the Messenger's ﷺ *'Ilm al-Ghayb* (knowledge of the unseen) is not unique. Such knowledge, they say, is known by common people such as

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[8] Wādih al-Barāhīn.

[9] Wādih alBarāhīn, page 10.

[10] al-Shihāb al-Thāqib, pg.43, by Hussain Ahmad Madanī, Kutub khāna I'zāziya, Deoband.

Zaid, Umar, mental children and even animals. It is thus not a speciality of the Messenger ﷺ.[11]

Other insulting and blasphemous beliefs include:

*The same people say that to believe in the Holy Prophet ﷺ as the Final and Last Prophet is a thought of the common people, and not of the learned.[12]

*In the same book on page twenty-five, he writes if another Prophet is born after the Holy Prophet ﷺ, even then the finality of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ remains unaffected.

*The Satan and the Angel of Death have all the knowledge on earth and their knowledge is greater than the Holy Prophet's ﷺ.[13]

*To think of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in Salāh (prayer) is worse than engrossing oneself in the thought of a donkey or buffalo.[14]

*Every creation, whether great or small before the Glory of Allāh ﷻ is more disgraced then a gutter cleaner.[15]

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[11] Hifz al-Īmān, pg.8, Maulvī Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī.
[12] Tahzīr al-Nās, pg.3, by Maulvī Qāsim Nanotwī.

[13] Barāhīn Qāti'ah, pg. 55 by Maulvī Khalīl Ahmad Ambethvī.
[14] al-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm, pg. 97 by Maulvī Ismā'īl Delhvī.
[15] Taqwiyah al-Īmān, page 13.

*In the same book (page 48), Ismā'īl Dehlvi writes, 'All the Prophets and saints in the presence of Allāh ﷻ are more worthless than a speck of dust.'[16]

*On page 52 in *Taqwiyah al-Īmān*, he writes,'Respect the Holy Prophet ﷺ like your elder brother.'[17]

*On page 53, he fabricates a saying regarding the Holy Prophet ﷺ by saying he ﷺ said, 'I am also one day going to die and mix into the earth.'[18]

*In *Barāhīn Qāti'ah* (page 52), Khalīl Ahmad Deobandī wrote that to celebrate the birthday of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is like celebrating the birth of kanhayya (a false Hindu God).[19] He further writes (page 30), that the Holy Prophet ﷺ learnt Urdu from the scholars of Deoband.[20]

*In *Bulgat al-Hairaan* (page 8), it is mentioned that the Holy Prophet ﷺ fell and that Ismā'īl Delhvī helped him.[21]

*In *Barāhīn Qāti'ah* (page 55), mentions that the Prophet ﷺ does not even know what is behind a wall.[22]

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[16] Taqwiyah al-Īmān, page 48.
[17] Taqwiyah al-Īmān, page 52.
[18] Taqwiyah al-Īmān, page 53.
[19] Barāhīn Qāti'ah, pg. 52by Khalīl Ahmad Deobandī.
[20] Barāhīn Qāti'ah, pg. 53by Khalīl Ahmad Deobandī.
[21] Bulgat al-Hairaan, page 8.
[22] Barāhīn Qāti'ah, page 55.

*In *Taqwiyah al-Īmān* (page 50), it states that nothing can happen by the choice of the Messenger ﷺ.[23]

Let me remind you that the slightest blasphemy of any prophet is kufr! The Holy Prophet ﷺ is for true Muslims the leader of all the Prophets and Messengers, the best of all creation from all of Allāh's ﷻ creation.

But he is nevertheless a creation of Allāh ﷻ, undoubtedly unparalleled, unique, the most honourable and dignified.

These misguided people (Wahhābīs, Salafīs and other deviant sects) fail to even believe in Allāh ﷻ correctly, who is not a creation but the Supreme, Most Exalted Creator of everything!

I will now list just a few of their incorrect beliefs in relation to our Creator, Allāh ﷻ.

In their version of the translation of the Qur'ān they say,

'Allāh mocks them.' (2:15)

This means 'to make fun of' or 'to ridicule'. This is not a virtue but a fault and an imperfection, which they are attributing to Allāh ﷻ. And to associate faults and imperfections to Allāh ﷻ is *kufr* (disbelief).

The translation, 'In return, Allāh will punish them for their mockery' is respectful and hence correct.

[23] Taqwiyah al-Īmān, page 50.

These blasphemies are common in most of their Urdu and English translations by the likes of deputy Nazeer Ahmad Deobandī, Shaykh Mahmood al-Hasan, Fatah Muhammad Jalandhree, 'Abd al-Mājid Deobandī, Mirza Hairat (Dehlvī Ghayr Muqallid), Nawāb Waheed al-Zamaan (Ghayr Muqallid), Sar Sayyid Ahmad ('Alī Garh Naighari) and many more.

Furthermore, these people have stipulated in their translations that 'He (Allāh) deceives them.' (4:142), hence propagating and preaching that Allāh ﷻ is a deceit. Whereas it would be correct and respectful to say that, 'He will destroy them by making them neglectful (as a result of their false assumption of desiring to deceive).' This demonstrates the due respect to the Creator ﷻ which is obligatory upon us.

This is their understanding of the Qur'ān that they propagate, and this is their way of surrendering to Allāh ﷻ. This is the *'Aqīdah* they provide for your heart and hence corrupt it, fill it with this filth and then label it as '*Tawhīd*'.

Respectable readers! Ask yourselves - do these words befit the grand, unique and matchless Status of Allāh ﷻ? These deviants would not say such things about their father, their Shuyūkh (scholars) or teachers. But they promote and propagate it about Allāh ﷻ. This is the level of their audacity.

In verse 21 of Sūrah Yūnus, they say Allāh ﷻ is a deceit and a cheat. In verse 67 of Sūrah Tawbah, most of their translations have said,'He (Allāh) has forgotten them.' Here they associate with Him the weakness of forgetfulness, which negates His Supreme Knowledge.

Allāh ﷻ is free from all imperfections. It should actually say, 'Allāh has abandoned them.'

His Absolute and Unlimited Knowledge of the unseen is also denied in their translations, they also promote that Allāh ﷻ is able to lie, which is once again an enormous blasphemy. Furthermore, they believe and propagate that He is restricted to places and is stationed, which is indicative of Him possessing a body.

This is of course incorrect and misguidance.

Great care and prudence must be employed when translating the Qur'ān, especially when referring to Allāh ﷻ and His glorious Prophets, upon whom be peace, and at the same time accuracy and precision must be the objective. This has only been observed by the Ahl al-Sunnah in all spheres of Islām, whether it is the translation of the Qur'ān, Hadīth or anything else.

This is why we have so many divisions in the Ummah as prophesied by our Holy Prophet ﷺ. In short, these people were not, and even today, are not properly qualified.

Hence, due to their unsatisfactory and incomplete knowledge, they have failed to understand Islām properly

and have instead presented their distorted, impure, incomplete and incorrect version of Islām.

It is therefore highly important that we provide our heart with the purest education, which means the correct belief in relation to *Tawhīd, Risālah* and the other Articles of Faith, which can only be found from the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al Jamā'ah.

Only then will the heart have correctly surrendered to the Will of Allāh ﷻ. Otherwise it will remain in profound misguidance without even realising it, as the Qur'ān proclaims:

'And Allāh has sealed their hearts (from accepting right guidance) so they do not know (their loss).' (9:93)

'By it He causes to mislead many and many He guides thereby.' (2:26)

'In their hearts is a disease, so Allāh has increased for them their disease; for them is a painful torment, because they used to tell lies.' (2:10)

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The Seal of Prophethood and the Qadīanīs

Muslims are required to believe that the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the Seal and Final Prophet of Allāh ﷻ as proclaimed in the Qur'ān,

> *'Muhammad (ﷺ) is not the father of any of you men, but the Messenger of Allāh, and the Seal and the Last of all the Prophets.' (33:40)*

Our Messenger ﷺ proclaimed,

> 'There will be thirty great liars in my Ummah, who will all claim to be Prophets. However, I am the (only) Final Prophet; there is no Prophet after me.'[24]

The above Hadīth further consolidates the correct belief a Muslim should have in relation to the Prophets of Allāh ﷻ. This Hadīth explicitly stipulates that until the Day of Judgement, no other Prophet will ever be sent. With regards to Sayyidunā' Īsā, upon whom be peace, his return near the Day of Judgement does not negate the finality of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

This is because 'Īsā, upon whom be peace, has previously been sent as a Prophet in the world and later he will come in the capacity of a follower of the Sharī'ah of Muhammad ﷺ and he will also follow and propagate Islām.

[24] Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Hadīth no. 2202.

The conviction one should have concerning *Khatm al-Nubuwwah* (Seal of Prophethood) is absolute and certain, and for a Muslim there is no second opinion.

The Qādianīs are the people who believe in Mirza Ghulām Ahmad as a Prophet, after the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and are thus disbelievers.

Al-Imām al-A'zam Abū Hanīfah stipulated that if a Muslim simply asks for proof from someone who claims to be a Prophet, then he will become a disbeliever. This is why the first Caliph, the Imām of all Muslims, Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Siddīq, may Allāh be pleased with him, did not ask the false claimant's of Prophethood to produce evidence, nor did any of the Sahābah, as to seek proof is, in a way, to not completely believe in the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as the last of all Prophets.

Instead he declared war against such mischief-makers and their followers, as was seen against Musaylma al-Kazzāb and his more than thirty thousand supporters in the Battle of Yamāmah.

The foundation for allowing people to believe in other Prophets after Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was laid by the founder of the Madrasah in Deoband, Maulvī Qāsim Nanotwī, by misinterpreting the meaning of 'Khātam al-Nabiyyīn' and saying that it simply is a notion of the general public and not of the scholars or learned.

The Hadīth of the Messenger ﷺ is self explanatory, and our Prophet ﷺ clearly stated himself the meaning of 'Khātam al-Nabiyyīn' that there will be no Prophet after me. To suggest a different meaning is to deny it; and hence disbelief!

Beliefs regarding the illustrious Sahābah

Likewise, it is imperative for all Muslims to honour and love all of the Companions (*Sahābah*) in order to remain a correct Muslim. This has been commanded to us by our Prophet ﷺ in his Hadīths and has also indirectly been commanded in the Glorious Qur'ān.

A Sahābī is that fortunate Muslim person who had the honour of seeing the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the state of Īmān, and must also have departed from this world as a believer.

According to the Qur'ān and Sunnah, all of the Companions are honourable, irrespective of their actions, and some are more superior to others.

The Glorious Qur'ān proclaims their status and forgiveness and that they are all dwellers of Paradise:

> *'Allāh is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them Paradise, gardens flowing beneath them are rivers wherein they shall live forever. That is the greatest success.' (9:100)*

> *'They are indeed the rightly guided.'* (49:7)
>
> *'And indeed Allāh has forgiven them.'* (3:155)
>
> *'And they are the ones who are truthful.'* (59:8)
>
> *'They are indeed the successful.'* (59:9)
>
> *'It is they who are the believers in truth.'* (8:4)

These excellences that have been stipulated are in the Qur'ān, which is the ultimate book of authority for Muslims. Hence, Muslims believe that all the Companions are honourable believers and are dwellers of Paradise.

The Rawāfid and Shī'ah

The Rawāfid and Shī'ah are those unfortunate people who immensely insult both the Companions, the Blessed Wives of the Prophet ﷺ (*Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn* - mothers of the believers) as well as the Ahl al-Bayt (the Household of the Prophet ﷺ).

In order to protect ourselves from the possession of such corrupted and incorrect beliefs I will stipulate just some of their impure beliefs:

- They believe that with the exception of a few, all of the Companions are infidels and hypocrites.[25]
- They accuse the first three Caliphs of tyranny and oppression against the Ahl al-Bayt and say that they seized caliphate via oppression.
- They slander Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him, by suggesting he was a coward.
- They believe that the twelve Imāms are more superior to the Prophets,[26] this is unanimously disbelief.
- They further believe that the Qur'ān is not preserved and protected and that the third Caliph or other Companions took some extracts out from it.[27] This is also disbelief.
- Another belief of theirs is that Allāh ﷻ, the Creator, is regretful after making some decisions by mistake, which is once again disbelief, as they portray Allāh ﷻ as *Jāhil* (illiterate).[28]

Their blasphemous beliefs, which in most cases amount to disbelief, have only been mentioned so we may protect our hearts from adopting such beliefs and to invite them to the straight path by abandoning such beliefs and

[25] Tuhfah e Ithnā'Ashariyyah.
[26] I'tiqādiyyah.
[27] Ihtijāj e Tabrasi.
[28] Ihtijāj e Tabrasi.

adopting the correct beliefs of the Ahlal-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah.

As the beliefs of all other sects except the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al Jamā'ah are incorrect and are detrimental to the heart. Ultimately this results in spiritual heart disease.

Hence, it is not only necessary to surrender the heart to Allāh ﷻ, but to do it correctly, in a manner which is devoid of inconsistencies and contradictions.

This can only be done when we adopt the beliefs of the Ahl al-Sunnah.

Even the beautiful and wise sayings of our Prophet ﷺ have cautioned Muslims to pay the utmost respect to his Companions.

By doing so, this demonstrates the loyalty of a believer to his Prophet ﷺ He ﷺ said,

> *'Fear Allāh regarding my Companions. Fear Allāh, do not make them an object of criticism after me. Whoever loves them, then he has loved them for my love (for the love he has for me) and whoever has enmity or begrudges them, he has begrudged them because of his grudge for me.*
>
> *And whoever gives them discomfort, has given me discomfort, and whoever has given me discomfort has (ultimately) caused Allāh discomfort. And whoever has*

caused Allāh discomfort, then soon Allāh shall seize him.'[29]

Therefore respectable readers, in this Hadīth our Beloved Master ﷺ has clearly declared that love for his Companions is the product of loving him, and hatred for them is because of hatred for the Prophet ﷺ.

So whoever claims to love the Prophet ﷺ, then he will definitely love his Companions and whoever has hatred for them has it because of his hatred for the Prophet ﷺ.

Thus, any claim to love the Prophet ﷺ in conjunction with hatred for his Sahābah is blatant falsehood. Similarly, their excellences have been stipulated in other Hadīths:

'Honour my Sahābah as they are the best among you.'[30]

'My Companions are like stars, whoever among them you follow, you will be guided'.[31]

[23 24 25 26 27 28] Mishkāh alMasābīh.

[29] Mishkāh alMasābīh, Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Manāqib.

[30] Al-Nisā', alSunan al-Kubrā 285/8.

[31] al-Suyūtī, Manāhil al-Safā, pg. 193.

[32 33] Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Da'wah, Abwāb al-Manāqib.

'When you see those people who swear at my Sahābah and abuse them, then say, "The curse of Allāh is upon your evil."'[32]

'The fire of Hell will not touch the Muslim who saw me or saw the person who saw me.'[33]

'Whosoever swears at my Companions, then the curse of Allāh, of all the Angels and of all humanity is upon him.'

This includes even the Companions who took part in wars and battles. Thus, to swear at them or abuse them is a major sin, and to attribute misguidance or disbelief towards them is itself disbelief.

Similarly in *al-Shifā*, authored by Qādī' Iyād, may Allāh have mercy upon him, it is mentioned that to insult the Companions verbally and to degrade them is harām.

Imām Mālik, may Allāh have mercy upon him, says, 'Their blasphemers should be severely punished.'[34]

Thus, all the Companions, regardless of their actions, after becoming a Sahābī, must be revered because of the commands of the Prophet ﷺ. Yes, some are more exalted than others in term of status and excellence.

[34] Barakāt Ālal-Rasūl.

Afdal al-Bashar ba'dal-Ambiyā'; Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Siddīq, may Allāh be pleased with him

In order to adhere to the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, in order to remain 'Sunnī' and in order to further protect our heart from adopting incorrect beliefs.

It is imperative to have a firm belief that the most honorable and righteous Companion (Sahābī) of the Prophet ﷺ from the entire congregation of the Companions and the most honorable and superior human being after the Prophets of Allāh ﷻ, upon whom be peace, is Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Siddīq, then Sayyidunā'Umar, then Sayyidunā'Uthmān and then Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh ﷻ be pleased with them all.[35]

Upon this belief there is absolute consensus (*Ijmā'*) of the Companions, the Ummah, and the Ahl al-Sunnah, thus making it an essential belief of the Ahl al-Sunnah. Anyone who rejects this belief is out of the folds of the Ahl al-Sunnah.[36]

Although all the Companions have been praised by Allāh ﷻ in the Glorious Qur'ān, no other Companion has been referred to as a Sahābī by Allāh ﷻ other than Sayyidunā

[35] al-Fiqh al-Akbar.

[36] FatāwāRidawiyyah.

Abū Bakr. This privilege and excellence is exclusive to him. (9:40)

He has further been stipulated as the most righteous and the most honourable in the divine view of Allāh ﷻ when He states in the Qur'ān,

> *'Undoubtedly the most honorable among you in the divine sight of Allāh is the most righteous among you.'* (49:13)

There is a consensus among the Sunnī exegesis (Qur'anic commentators) of the Glorious Qur'ān that the 'most righteous, the most pious'one in Sūrah al-Layl (2:17) refers to Sayyidunā Abū Bakr, may Allāh be pleased with him, *as stated by Imām Fakhral-Dīn Rāzī.*[37]

It is unfortunate that some Muslims have created a fitna (mischief) regarding the superior status of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Siddīq, may Allāh be pleased with him. I therefore deem it necessary to clarify this issue, in light of the beliefs of the Ahl al-Sunnah.

As far as the Ahl al-Sunnah is concerned, Sayyidunā Abū Bakr, may Allāh be pleased with him, is and has always been the most exalted, the most dignified, the most honourable being after the Prophets, upon whom be peace. This is according to all four sources of Sharī'ah (i.e. Qurān, Hadīth, Ijmā' and Qiyās).

[37] FatāwāRidawiyyah,volume 28,page 512.

Symbolically, the Prophet ﷺ exhibited and highlighted this in his Hadīths and hence, this was the belief of the Companions, even during the blessed life of the Prophet ﷺ.

Sayyidunā Ibn 'Umar, may Allāh be pleased with him, reports that,

> *'During the physical life of the Prophet ﷺ, we (the Sahābah) never thought anyone to be equal to Sayyidunā Abū Bakr and then Sayyidunā'Umar. Then after Sayyidunā'Uthmān, we would leave the Sahābah as they were, and not give excellence to anyone among them.'*[38]

Sayyidunā Anas, may Allāh be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said,

> *'To love Abū Bakr, and to be grateful to him is binding upon all of my Ummah.'*[39]

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah, may Allāh be pleased with her, reported that the Prophet ﷺ declared,

> *'The community among which there is Abū Bakr present, it is not suitable for any other to lead as Imām.'*

This Hadīth explicitly substantiates that after the Beloved Prophet ﷺ, the Imām of the Muslims (whether it is *Sughrā*

[38] Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Hadīth no. 2679.
[39] Ta'rīkh al-Khulafā', al-Suyūtī.

for Salāh or *Kubrā* for Khilāfah), is the exclusive right of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr, may Allāh be pleased with him.

This Hadīth further demonstrates that in this Ummah after the Prophet ﷺ, Sayyidunā Abū Bakr may Allāh be pleased with him, is the most superior and deserving of Imāmah and Khilāfah.

It is therefore the belief of the Ahl al-Sunnah upon which there is an absolute consensus (*Ijmā'*) that Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Siddīq, may Allāh be pleased with him, has the highest position and status among the entire Ummah after the Prophet ﷺ.

This was also the belief and conviction held by Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him. His son, Sayyidunā Muhammad Ibn Hanafiyyah, may Allāh be pleased with him, narrates, 'I asked my father, after the Holy Prophet ﷺ, who is the best?' Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him, replied, 'Sayyidunā Abū Bakr.'[40]

Furthermore Ibn 'Asākir reported from 'Abd al-Rahmān Ibn Abī Laylā, that Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with them all, announced, 'Whoever says that I ('Alī) am more superior than Sayyidunā Abū Bakr or 'Umar, then I will flog him eighty lashes; the punishment given to a slanderer.'[41]

[40] Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Hadīth no. 3395.
[41] Ta'rīkh Dimishq Ibn 'Asākir vol.30, pg. 383, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut.

This has always been the belief of the Imāms of our *Aslāf* (earlier scholars) of the Ahl al-Sunnah and shall remain so.

Sayyidunā Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz (the author of *Fatāwā'Azīziyyah)*, Sayyidunā Shāh 'Abd al-Haqq Muhaddithe Dehlvī, Imām Rabbānī, MujaddidAlf al-Thānī Shaykh Ahmad Fārūqī Sarhindī, Dātā Ganj Bakhsh 'Alī Hajwerī, and the Mujaddid of this century, Imām Ahmād Razā Khān of Barelwī.

Have all advocated that it is not permissible to give Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him, regardless of his excellences and magnificence, superiority over the Shaykhayn (Sayyidunā Abū Bakr Siddiq and Sayyidunā' Umar Farooq Azam, may Allāh be pleased with them both).

Shāh 'Abdal-Azīz, may Allāh have mercy upon him, states[42], that whoever disagreed with the excellence Sayyidunā Abū Bakr holds over everyone, then he is not from the Ahl al-Sunnah, and is a deviant and thus not worthy of being an Imām.

[42] Tuhfah e Ithnā'Ashariyyah.

The Tafdīlī Shī'ah

The Tafdīlīs have similar beliefs in this regard as the Shī'ah, and thus claim that one can love Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him, more, and thus believe him as superior over Sayyidunā Abū Bakr, may Allāh be pleased with him.

However, this is another deception and insincerity on their part. This is how they intend to undermine the Ahl al-Sunnah by harbouring a belief of the Tafdīlīs whilst claiming they are Sunnis.

However, Dātā'Alī Hajwerī, may Allāh have mercy upon him, explicitly states that if someone cannot help himself from loving Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him, more than the Shaykhayn (Sayyidunā Abū Bakr and Sayyidunā 'Umar, may Allāh be pleased with them both), only then (where he is genuinely helpless), he can have more love for Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him.

But at the same time, he must nevertheless believe the Shaykhayn are more superior to him.[43]

So the *Ijmā'* (absolute consensus of all the Companions and Ahl al-Bayt) has been established regarding the superiority of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr, may Allāh be pleased with him.

[43] Kashf al-Mahjūb.

So much so, that even Imām Abū Hanīfah, may Allāh have mercy upon him, has written; that belief in the superior status of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr and Sayyidunā' Umar, may Allāh be pleased with them both, over the entire Sahābah and Ahl al-Bayt is a sign of the Ahl al-Sunnah.

The Imām of the Ahl al-Sunnah, Mawlānā Shāh Ahmad Razā Khān Barelwī, may Allāh have mercy upon him, has declared in his edict,[44] that there is an Ijmā' (absolute consensus) of the Ahl al-Sunnah that Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Siddīq, may Allāh be pleased with him, is more honourable and superior than Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him.

And whoever opposes this belief, is an innovator, Shī'ah and Rāfidī, and let me remind my respectable readers that this fatwā (edict) by the Imām remains valid until the Day of Judgement.

[44] Fatāwā Ridawiyyah, volume 28, page 420.

The Ahl al-Bayt (the Blessed Household of our Nabī ﷺ)

Similarly, it is imperative for every believer to love and honour the Ahl al-Bayt, in order for the heart to remain correct in it's submission to Allāh.

According to the majority of the scholars, the Ahl al-Bayt includes all of the Honourable and Pure Wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, his children, all of Banū Hāshim and Sayyidunā'Abbās, may Allāh be pleased with him. The other uncles of the Prophet ﷺ and first cousins are included in the Ahl al-Bayt.[45]

Some scholars have also included the household servants. According to Imām al-'Arifīn Shaykh Muhyuddīn Ibn 'Arabī, may Allāh have mercy upon him, the Ahl al-Bayt includes also the Sādāt Kirām, the offspring of Sayyidah Fātimah al-Zahrah, may Allāh be pleased with her, and even Sayyidunā Salmān, may Allāh be pleased with him, is among the Ahl al-Bayt.

All these dignified and noble people are extremely honourable and their honour stems from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Demonstrating honour to them is a part of complying with the command of Allāh ﷻ in the Holy Qur'ān,

'And revere him and respect him.' (48:9)

[45] Khāzin.

However, the four esteemed personalities who were included and referred to as the Ahl al-Bayt on special occasions are Sayyidunā'Alī, Sayyidah Fātimah, Imām Hasan and Imām Hussain, may Allāh be pleased with them. The title of Ahl al-Bayt has extensively been used for these people. Their elevated status and purity is clearly stipulated in the Glorious Qur'ān,

> *'Allāh wills only to remove from you all forms of impurity, O Members of the Prophet's Household, and to purify you after cleansing you thoroughly.'* (33:33)

Their love has been declared as compulsory for Muslims according to both the Qur'ān and Hadīth,

> *'Say (O my Beloved), I ask from you no reward (for providing you with the guidance of Islam) except love for (my) close relatives (children, wives, etc).'* (42:23)

The love for the Ahl al-Bayt will serve as a source of salvation on the Day of Judgement and will provide endless peace, comfort, tranquillity and much more in the Hereafter. Furthermore, it is a sign of having love for our Master, the Prophet ﷺ, as he himself has commanded Muslims to love his household,

> *'Love me, in order to love Allāh, and love my Ahl al-Bayt, to show love to me!'*[46]

[46] al-Tirmidhī,Hadīth no. 6182.

The Prophetic traditions contain in abundance the excellences and attributes of Sayyidunā Imām Hasan, Imām Hussain, Sayyidunā'Alī and Sayyidah Fātimah, may Allāh be pleased with them.

And it is the belief of the Ahl al-Sunnah that a person who does not possess love for the Ahl al-Bayt is a hypocrite, and is among the Khawārij and misguided. Having their love and honour ensures guidance and steadfastness upon Islām. The Prophet ﷺ declared,

> *'O people, I have left among you those, that if you hold on to them (firmly), then you will never be misguided; the Book of Allāh and my Household.'*[47]

Also, Sayyidunā Abū Dharr may Allāh be pleased with him, held onto the door of the Ka'bah and announced, 'I have heard the Prophet ﷺ declare "Beware, My Ahl al-Bayt are for you like the Ark of Nūh; whoever boards it has attained salvation and whoever is left behind has perished.'[48]

Furthermore, Sayyidunā Ibn 'Abbās, may Allāh be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet ﷺ declared that if a person remained at a corner of the Ka'bah Sharīf and between the Maqām Ibrāhīm, prayed his Salāh there

[47] al-Tirmidhī, Hadīth no. 3786.
[48] al-Tirmidhī, Hadīth no. 3786.

and observed fasting, yet he died with the enmity of the Ahl al-Bayt, then he will go to Hell.[49]

Therefore, the Qur'ān and Hadīth substantiate that one's faith can only attain completion with the love and honour for the Ahl al-Bayt. Such people who have been blessed with the love for the Ahl al-Bayt are following the footsteps of our Companions and the pious predecessors, and have been promised immense rewards, some of which are as follows. The Prophet ﷺ declared,

> *'Whoever dies with the love of the Ahl al-Bayt, has died as a martyr (Shahīd), his sins will be forgiven, he will die upon repentance, with the completeness of faith (Īmān), he will be given the glad tidings of Paradise by the Angel of Death and by Munkar and Nakīr (Angels of the grave), he will enter Paradise with such honour as a bride is sent to the groom. Two doors in his grave shall remain open to Paradise, Allāh shall make his grave a visiting place for the Angels of mercy, and he shall die upon the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al Jamā'ah (i.e. the only path of salvation).'*[50]

Conversely, the one who has enmity towards the family of the Prophet ﷺ (including the Blessed Wives, may Allāh be pleased with them), then he shall emerge on the Day of Judgement in such a way that it shall be written between his eyes 'deprived of Allāh's Mercy', he will die as an non

[49] al-Tabarānī, al-Hākim.
[50] Tafsīr al-Kabīr, volume 7, page 390.

believer, and will be deprived from even the fragrance of Paradise.[51]

In short, the beloved of Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ is that Muslim who has the love for the Ahl al-Bayt and love for all of the Prophet's Wives (the honourable mothers of the believers), may Allāh be pleased with them.

He shall also have hatred for their enemies, like Yazīd and his supporters who were responsible for the tyranny committed against Sayyidunā Imām Hussain, may Allāh be pleased with him. Whoever dies in the enmity and hatred for the Ahl al-Bayt is the enemy of Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ.

Finally, regarding the Ahl al-Bayt, I deem it necessary to also point out here that our claim to love the Ahl al-Bayt and the Companions is only valid if our hearts have correctly submitted to the Will of Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ.

In other words, we will love all the Companions, including Sayyidunā Amīr Mu'āwiyah may Allāh be pleased with him, as Imām Hasan, may Allāh be pleased with him, established peace with him.

And we will detest their enemies, like Yazīd and his supporters as he was the enemy of Imām Hussain, may Allāh be pleased with him, and the Ahl al-Bayt, and thus

[51] Tafsīr al-Kabīr, volume 7, page 390.

ultimately became the enemy of Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ.

Anyone who dishonours the Ahl al-Bayt or the Sahābah is rebelling against the Sharī'ah, as are those who insult Ummal-Mu'minīn Sayyidah'Ā'ishah, may Allāh be pleased with her, in relation to the matter of *Ifk* (attacking her purity).

Whoever attributes the allegation of such an impurity towards Sayyidah'Ā'ishah, may Allāh be pleased with her, is an disbeliever and apostate and those who criticise her in other matters are misguided and dwellers of Hell.

The Awliyā' Allāh

It is equally important for the correct submission of the heart that we honour the signs of Allāh ﷻ- and the Awliyā' Allāh are His signs, as substantiated by the Qur'ān and Hadīth .The Qur'ān states,

> *'Whoever honours the signs of Allāh then it is by virtue of the piety of the hearts.'* (22:32)

A Companion once asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ, 'Who are the Awliyā' Allāh?' The Prophet ﷺ replied, "They are the people that when they are seen, Allāh is remembered.'[52]

Allāh ﷻ has highlighted their elevated status in the Glorious Qur'ān:

> *'Beware, undoubtedly the Friends of Allāh have no fear upon them, and nor do they grieve.'* (10:62)

> *'They are those who are believers and are always obedient to Allāh.'* (10:63)

The above verses quoted clearly indicate that a Wali (i.e. Friend) of Allāh ﷻ is a Muslim, meaning they must belong to the Ahl al-Sunnah. A non-Sunnī (any follower of the other sects) can never be a Wali of Allāh ﷻ . Further, he is someone whose piety (*Taqwā*) is continuous and there is no concept of *Taqwā* without purity of '*Aqīdah* (faith).

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[52] Majma' al-Zawā'id, Hadīth no. 16779.

These people have special characteristics as mentioned in the Qur'ān and Hadīth; they remain constant in their obedience to Allāh ﷻ and they abstain and distance themselves from the luxuries and pleasures of this world.

By demonstrating steadfastness upon Sharī'ah, the Friends of Allāh ﷻ attain proximity to Allāh ﷻ which is exclusive to them, known as *Wilāyah*. All of the Friends of Allāh ﷻ are learned and are not illiterate in Islām.

There are also ranks among the Awliyā' Allāh. Some are greater than others and have, subject to their status, been bestowed with the power to perform miracles known as *Karāmāt* (saintly miracles).

It is permissible and preferable to seek their help, since with the power bestowed to them by Allāh ﷻ. They are able to help mankind during their life and some even after their demise.

It is permissible, virtuous and rewarding to visit their shrines, an act in which one qualifies for the blessings and mercy from Allāh ﷻ as,

> *'Undoubtedly, the Mercy of Allāh is close to the doers of good.'* (7:56)

To deny the excellences of the Awliyā' Allāh, or to deny them is an act of misguidance.

Tawbah (Repentance)

The pure and sincere heart will also regularly engage in turning to Allāh ﷻ to supplicate to him for forgiveness (Tawbah). This is essential for every Muslim after sinning. Tawbah entails three conditions; firstly to abstain from the sin, secondly to have profound regret of the sin and thirdly, to adopt a firm intention not to return to that sin. On numerous occasions in the Qur'ān, Allāh ﷻ not only commands the Muslims but also encourages them to plead to Him for forgiveness.

> *'And turn to Allāh, all of you, to seek forgiveness O believers! So that you may be successful.'* (24:32)

Meaning success is dependent on seeking forgiveness from Allāh ﷻ. Muslims should never be bold and audacious in sinning, nor should they despair from the limitless Mercy of Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ warns us that only the disbelievers despair from His Mercy.

> *'Surely no one despairs of Allāh's Mercy except the disbelieving people.'* (12:87)

> *'And ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him (in repentance); surely my Lord is Merciful and Loving.'* (11:90)

It is imperative for us to be firm and sincere in our repentance. Allāh ﷻ addresses the believers with the words:

> *'O believers, turn to Allāh with sincere repentance.'* (8:66)

Sayyidunā' Umar al-Khattāb, may Allāh be pleased with him, the leader of the Muslims, the champion of justice, advised one of his companions, that just as it is not possible to return the milk to the udders of a cow after milking it, a believer should not return to the sin after repenting.

A sign that the repentance has been accepted in the Majestic Court of Allāh ﷻ, is that one will not return to the sin after having repented and will start to live in obedience to the Commands of Allāh ﷻ. Our Master, the leader of the Prophets and Messengers, Sayyidunā Muhammad ﷺ would supplicate to Allāh ﷻ more than 70 times a day.[53]

And according to the narration in Sahīh Muslim, 100 times, thus making it his Sunnah.

Let not any critic wrongly assume that this indicates that our Nabī ﷺ sinned; our Nabī ﷺ is the leader of the sinless, and it is the correct belief of every believer that all of the Prophets are sinless as stipulated in the books of 'Aqā'id.

[53] Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Hadīth no. 5948, Kitāb al-Da'wah.

The reason he engaged in supplicating to Allāh ﷻ for forgiveness was to express his humbleness in the Majestic Court of Allāh ﷻ, to attain further closeness and to teach his Ummah.

The one who had repented from his sins, is like the one who has never sinned.'[54]

Further, this will also provide us with the opportunity to become the beloved of Allāh ﷻ.

> *'Allāh loves those who turn to Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves.'* (2:222)

It is also important for us to understand that if the sin that has been committed is in relation to Huqūq Allāh ﷻ (rights of Allāh ﷻ) or Huqūq al 'Ibād (rights of people), then the repentance must be done accordingly.

For example, if someone has not prayed their obligatory Salāh, or observed the obligatory fasts, then in addition to supplicating to Allāh ﷻ for forgiveness, one must compensate all the missed Salāhs and fasts. Likewise the Zakāh for the arrears must be paid and tawbah for delaying Hajj will also be required.

Similarly, if someone has wrongfully seized the wealth or property of another; then until that Muslim does not forgive him, he will not be forgiven by Allāh ﷻ. A simple

[54] Ibn Mājah, Hadīth no. 4250.

supplication of asking Allāh ﷻ to forgive will fail to suffice. He will be required to return the property to the owner for his repentance to be valid.

Bid'ah (Innovation)

According to the Islamic scholars, innovation (*Bid'ah*) comprises of two types, good and bad (*hasanah* and *sayyi'ah*). Only that *Bid'ah* which is against Sharī'ah (i.e. Qur'ān and Sunnah) is deemed a bad or evil *Bid'ah*. All other forms of *Bid'ah* fall under the category of *Bid'ah Hasanah* and hence are sometimes compulsory, recommended or preferable.

To assert that all forms of Bid'ah are misguidance is a complete misunderstanding of the term and is itself a Bid'ah and hence misguidance!

Submission of the entire body

Thus respectable readers, in order for us to become a better 'Muslim', as mentioned earlier, it is imperative that each and every limb and organ, including our emotions, become a Muslim, namely they submit to the will of Allāh ﷻ.

A'mal (deeds) are nevertheless important, and reflect the strength of one's belief and true success and fortification of Imān can only be achieved upon the establishment of good deeds (*A'māl Sālihah*).

The importance of performing good deeds has been highlighted amply by Allāh ﷻ, His Beloved Prophet ﷺ, the Companions and the Awliyā' Allāh.

In Shā Allāh ﷻ I will mention briefly how our entire body should submit to the Will of Allāh ﷻ, which itself is a great blessing of Allāh ﷻ. To use them correctly is a sign of gratitude to Allāh ﷻ. And to misuse and hence abuse these God-given blessings is a sign of ingratitude, for which each and every one of us is going to be held accountable.

> *'Then you will surely be questioned that Day about all the favours (Allāh bestowed to you).'* (102:8)

These favours include the entire body, the five senses, our youth, the wealth, the knowledge we acquired and how we used them, we will be questioned about these. In fact,

every time we inhale and exhale then this is also a favour of Allāh ﷻ ! We will also be asked about the ultimate favour bestowed to us by Allāh ﷻ , which is our Prophet ﷺ.

We will be asked about our loyalty and faithfulness to him, our love and honour for him, which is the crux and soul of our Īmān (faith). The favours of Allāh ﷻ are indeed countless.

> *'And if you were to count the favours of Allāh, you will not be able to number them.' (14:34).*

Allāh ﷻ commands us to be grateful to Him in the Glorious Qur'ān:

> *'And keep giving due thanks to me, and be not ungrateful to Me.' (2:152)*
>
> *'Undoubtedly, Allāh is Bountiful to Mankind, but most of them are ungrateful.' (10:60)*
>
> *'And be thankful to Allāh, if it is indeed Him Whom you worship.' (2:162)*

Respectable readers, the Glorious Qur'ān, the Final Revelation of Allāh ﷻ is the living miracle of the Prophet ﷺ and the Hadīths provide us with a wealth of information of how to live as good Muslims and are thus a complete manual for Muslims.

We must study and read them with understanding, ensuring that the translations are of Sunni Muslims as only these are correct.

Submission of the eyes

Regarding the gifts of hearing and seeing the Qur'ān says,

> *'Surely the ears and eyes and heart, all of these (i.e.you) will be questioned (regarding them).' (17:36)*

But how are the eyes and ears required to submit to Allāh ﷻ (to be Muslims)?

Regarding the eyes, Allāh ﷻ instructs the believing men and women:

> *'Say O Beloved, to the believing (Muslim) men, to lower their gaze and to protect their private parts'. (24:30)*

And to women, Allāh ﷻ instructs via His Beloved,

> *'And command the Muslim women to keep their eyes lowered and to protect their private parts.' (24:31)*

What this means is that the eyes have submitted to the Will of Allāh ﷻ when men abstain from looking at non-Mahārim (women with whom Nikāh is permissible), whether it is on the streets, television or anywhere else.

They should keep their sights lowered at all times and only gaze on things that are spiritually good for the eyes.

Islamic scholars have mentioned those things that are beneficial to our vision and even rewarding; to look at the words of the Qur'ān, the Ka'bah and even the face of the 'Ulamā'. The Prophet ﷺ said that to look at the face of a scholar is like looking at me. Furthermore, to look at the Awliyā' Allāh and parents is indeed rewarding.

It is mentioned in a Hadīth that to look at the face of your parents with love, Allāh ﷻ will provide you with the reward of an accepted Hajj, every time you look![55]

The great Khwaja Mo'īn al-Dīn Chishtī, may Allāh have mercy upon him, (also known as Gharīb Nawaaz) said that looking at the words of the Qur'ān not only enhances your vision but also cures the eyes from any potential disease.

It is the evil desire (*al-Nafs al-Ammārah*) which commands us to look at obscenities. But as we are not its slaves, rather, we are the slaves of Allāh ﷻ. Then why should we entertain calls from our evil desires over and above the command of Allāh ﷻ? Are we not His servants?

[55] Shu'ab al-Īmān, Hadīth no. 7611.

Submission of the ears

Likewise, we are going to be questioned regarding our hearing. With our ears we should only listen to those things that are permissible and abstain from the prohibitions in order to keep them as 'Muslims'.

The Muslim ears should listen to the recitation of the Qur'ān, the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ (*Dhikr*), praises of the Prophet ﷺ (*Na't Rasūl*), praises of the Awliyā' Allāh and speeches on the Qur'ān and Sunnah delivered by Ahl al-Sunnah scholars.

And as the Qur'ān instructs us, we should avoid listening to backbiting, listening to slander of Muslims, gossip and indecent, immoral, shameless and abusive conversations, all which will undoubtedly delight and please the evil desire, but will displease our Creator ﷻ , the one we have all surrendered our ears to!

Even listening to backbiting is prohibited; Imām al-Ghazalī, may Allāh have mercy upon him, writes that the person backbiting is pouring all the filth from his mouth into the ear of the listener.

Submission of the tongue

The tongue is a very important limb of the body. It is the tongue that interprets the heart and mind. In some cases, it results in the commission of major sins, including the ultimate sin of *Kufr* (disbelief). In the Qur'ān, Allāh ﷻ has stipulated several verses regarding the tongue and mouth, as through these limbs one speaks.

A 'Muslim' tongue will endeavour to only please Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ, by being obedient to the commands and injunctions of Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ. Our Creator ﷻ says regarding speech:

'And speak good to people.' (2:83)

An obedient tongue will only be utilised for the recitation of the Qur'ān, and for the praise (*Hamd*) and glorification of Allāh ﷻ. It will preoccupy itself in the remembrance of its Creator, as commanded by Allāh ﷻ,

'O believers! Remember Allāh in abundance.' (33:41)

A Muslim tongue will recite the *Kalimah Sharīf* in abundance and will send peace and blessings upon the most honourable of all creation, the leader of the Prophets and Messengers, Muhammad ﷺ.

The tongue will talk about his virtues and excellences bestowed to him by Allāh ﷻ. It will recite *Na'ts*, as this is also a part of indirect worship of Allāh ﷻ. It will also commend the Companions, the Ahl al-Bayt and the

Awliyā' Allāh. The obedient tongue will always be truthful and will always promote good and forbid evil.

'And Muslim men and Muslim women are helpers of one another; they command good and forbid all evil.' (9:71)

Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ have (also) prohibited sins that are committed with the tongue. The Qur'ān elaborately prohibits the vices normally done by our tongue:

'O believers, let not men make fun of other men.' (49:11)

'And let not women make fun of other women.' (49:11)

'And do not defame one another nor call one another by evil nicknames. What a bad name it is to be called an evildoer whilst being a Muslim.' (49:11)

'Do not backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would of course not tolerate it.' (49:12)

'Woe is to every slanderer (who taunts in one's face) and every slanderer (who backbites).' (104:1)

Note: Backbiting is speaking negatively about another Muslim in his absence or without him knowing, with the intention of degrading him.

Thus, respectable readers, it is not permissible for a 'Muslim' tongue to indulge in these sins as mentioned above; teasing, making fun of others, giving a false testimony, lying, swearing, spreading gossip, hateful statements of abusive language and so on.

Our Prophet ﷺ stated,'A Muslim is one from whom (other) muslims are safe, from his tongue and hands.'[56]

Additionally, he also taught us how to protect ourselves from the evils of the tongue.

> *'Whoever observes silence, is safe.'*[57]

Therefore, silence has been praised and advised.

> *'Silence is wisdom and there are few who adopt it.'*[58]

> *'Whoever gives me a guarantee (of the chastity) regarding that which is between the jaws (i.e. the tongue) and that which is between the legs (i.e. the private parts), I guarantee them Paradise'.*[59]

> *'People will be dragged by their nostrils and thrown in Hell by virtue of the crops reaped by the tongue (conversations).'*[60]

[56] Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Īmān.
[57] Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Hadīth no. 2501.
[58] Sunan al-Bayhaqī, al-Shu'ab al-Īmān.
[59] Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Riqāq.
[60] Sunan Ibn Mājah, chapter of tribulations.

It is therefore imperative that all forms of unnecessary conversations are always avoided.

Regarding being two faced, this is the essence of hypocrisy! The Prophet ﷺ declared,

> *'A person who has two faces in the world, on the Day of Judgement; he will have two tongues of fire.'*[61]

It is the evil desire and the influence of Shaytān which commands us to indulge in the above mentioned verses, but as we are not their servants, why should we entertain their demands? We belong to Allāh ﷻ.

We claim to submit to Him and to His Will; we should therefore only do with our tongue and our other limbs what He is pleased with. This is in our interest, and this will benefit us in this world and in the Hereafter.

In short, as the Hadīth says,

> *'Whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day, he should speak good, or remain silent.'*[62]

So, we should be preoccupied in the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ, or observe silence.

[61] al-Adab al-Mufrad (aspects of behaviour).
[62] Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Sahīh al-Muslim, chapter of good manners and form.

The submission of the hands and feet

The hands surrender to Allāh's ﷻ Will by only doing what is permissible or virtuous such as using them to earn lawful earnings, or assisting towards the construction of a mosque, or physically supporting and benefitting others, or touching the Qur'ān and shaking hands with the pious, or 'Ulamā'.

Or to raise them for du'ā', to pass over the head of an orphan (for each hair that came under the hand, one will receive virtues).

The hands should never be used to violate the laws of Sharī'ah to strike someone unnecessarily, as our noble Prophet ﷺ declared,

> *'A Muslim is the one, from whose tongue and hands other Muslims are at peace from.'*[63]

This Hadīth therefore rules out all types of oppression, verbal or physical. The hands should furthermore not be used to gamble, to touch non-Mahārim, to masturbate, to give or take bribes nor to steal.

Likewise 'Muslim' feet are those which endeavour never to violate the laws of Islām and which are only used for the establishment of virtues.

[63] Mishkāh al-Masābīh.

This includes acts such as going to the mosque to pray Salāh, performing Hajj and Umrah, visiting our Master ﷺ in Madīnah al-Munawwarah, Islamic heritage, attending Islamic events and visiting the shrines of the Awliyā' Allāh. The Awliyā' Allāh are the 'Signs of Allāh ﷻ' and so we should honour them, as this forms the piety of the heart.

> *'And whoever honours the Signs of Allāh, then that is by virtue of the piety of the hearts.'* (22:32)

The feet should never be used to disobey Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ; namely for all those things that contravene the Sharī'ah.

The Qur'ān proclaims that the hands, feet and body will be given the power to speak and give testimony against the person himself on the Day of Judgement,

> *'Their ears and their eyes and their skins will bear witness against them in respect of what they used to do. And they will say to their skins, "Why did you bear witness against us?" They will say, "Allāh has made us speak. He, who gave speaking power to everything and it is He who had created you first and to Him you are to return."'* (41:20-21)

Therefore all these limbs are the witnesses of Allāh ﷻ, as He is the One Who gave them to us to use correctly, and they belong to Allāh ﷻ who is our Creator, as the Qur'ān declares,

'Undoubtedly, we belong to Allāh and undoubtedly to Him we will return.' (2:156)

On the Day of Judgement they will testify against the non-Muslims when they fail to acknowledge their disbelief and non-acceptance with their tongue. The Qur'ān further states,

'Today we shall seal the mouths of the non Muslims, and their hands will speak to us, and their feet will bear witness to what they used to earn.' (36:65)

Submission of the private parts

As a Muslim, one is required to control himself and not engage in any kind of non-marital relationship. And thus not misuse their body and their private parts by not violating the Sharī'ah. This includes homosexuality and lesbianism. In the Qur'ān, Allāh ﷻ states,

'And come not near to unlawful sexual intercourse. Certainly, it is (extreme) shamelessness and an evil path.' (17:32)

'And those who guard their chastity (i.e. private parts from prohibited intercourse).' (23:5)

The punishment in the Hereafter for this act of evil and extreme shamelessness is indeed horrific and excruciating.

Submission of our emotions

Even our emotions, such as anger, must be 'Muslim', namely they should surrender to the Will of Allāh ﷻ, by only getting angry for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, for His religion and for His Beloved Prophet ﷺ, and not for personal reasons.

Islām promotes selflessness, not selfishness. The Hadīth of our Holy Prophet ﷺ advises us,

'Whoever loves for the sake of Allāh, and hates for the sake of Allāh, and gives for the sake of Allāh, and withholds for the sake of Allāh, he has perfected faith.' [64]

The Islamic scholars declare; to respect or love someone for their disbelief (*kufr*) is *kufr*.

The Qur'ān proclaims,

'O you who believe! Do not consider your fathers and your brothers as your friend if they prefer disbelief over faith. And whoever amongst you makes friends with them, then they are wrongdoers.' (9:23)

Therefore, one's emotions, such as love and friendship must be 'Muslim' and not be left unregulated. Moreover they should observe the Commands of Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ and not follow evil desires and Shaytān; in friendship, love and anger.

[64] Sunan Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Sunnah.

Anger is that destructive emotion which, if not regulated by the laws of Sharī'ah, will ultimately lead to destruction. Anger is the major cause of the destruction of families.

It breaks up friendship, love and relationships between husband and wife, and results sometimes in *Talāq* (divorce) or domestic violence. It stems from the lack of tolerance, patience and perseverance, and selfishness, jealousy and greed may also be factors.

Time and time again, we hear of deaths caused, marriages broken or properties destroyed because of anger and for the most trivial reasons.

However, that anger which is a 'Muslim', namely which has surrendered to the Will and Choice of Allāh ﷻ, will only respond for the Will and Choice of Allāh ﷻ; in other words for the sake of Allāh ﷻ.

This quality as well as all the attributes of a complete and perfect 'Muslim' are possessed by our Prophet ﷺ, who is the ultimate 'Muslim', as declared by the Qur'ān,

> *'Surely, you have an excellent example for your guidance in (the life) the Messenger of Allāh (□).' (33 21)*

Anger that has surrendered to the Will of Allāh ﷻ will lead to prosperity both in this life and in the Hereafter. Our Prophet ﷺ and his noble Companions were never angered for worldly or for personal matters, but only for the religion.

The Qur'ān proclaims,

> *'Muhammad (ﷺ) is the Messenger of Allāh, and those with him are severe against the disbelievers and tender amongst themselves.' (48:29)*

Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him, the fourth Caliph, is reported to have forgiven a non-believers whom he was about to slay with his sword in the battlefield, when the non-believers suddenly spat in the face of Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him.

When he was questioned why, he replied that up until the non Muslim had not spat, Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him, was solely fighting for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and when the non Muslim spat, then there may have been the possibility of the involvement of the personal self (nafs) of Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him.

And as he was fighting solely for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and not for his nafs, he spared him, which demonstrates that Sayyidunā'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him, is not angered for personal reasons, but only for the sake of Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ ; exhibiting the qualities of a true Imām and leader of Muslims.

All these qualities seen in the Companions were taught and bestowed to them by the Prophet ﷺ , as he purified them and showed them the way with his noble conduct and character.

Furthermore regarding anger, Imām al-Ghazālī, may Allāh have mercy upon him, writes that anger is a concealed fire present in the heart, just as how you have concealed fire beneath ashes, and the anger unveils the concealed arrogance.[65]

Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah, may Allāh be pleased with him, narrates that a man asked the Prophet ﷺ, 'Advise me of an action.' The Prophet ﷺ declared, 'Do not become angry.' He asked once again, and the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Do not become angry.'[66]

Similarly, in another Hadīth, the Prophet ﷺ described good character as not getting angry, even if you can. Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ declares that the strong is not someone who can topple someone over, rather, the strong one is he, who remains in control even at the time of anger.[67]

Our Prophet ﷺ is a model for all mankind and there is guidance for us by following his perfect and flawless example. Sayyidunā Anas, may Allāh be pleased with him, reported that, 'I was walking with the Prophet ﷺ, whilst he was wearing a Najrani Shawl which had a thick hem. A Bedouin followed him, and pulled his shawl very violently, that I noticed the side of the Prophet's neck being bruised by the hem of the shawl, caused by the

[65] Ihyā'al-'Ulūm al-Dīn.

[66] Sahīh al-Bukhārī, HadIth no. 1954.

[67] Sahīh al-Muslim, Kitāb al-Zuhd wa al-Raqā'iq.

violent pull. Then the Bedouin said, "O Muhammad (ﷺ), give me from Allāh's wealth which is with you." Then the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ turned towards him and simply smiled, and he ordered for him to be given something.'[68]

This Hadīth demonstrates the selfless nature, exemplary conduct and excellent morals, ethics and behaviour of the Prophet ﷺ.

Our Holy Prophet ﷺ demonstrated in his beautiful life how to make your anger into a 'Muslim' (as in the incident of the shawl), by only being angry for the sake of Allāh ﷻ, and not for personal reasons, as anger itself is a tool and is an essential ingredient inherent in all humans. It is by virtue of anger that one is able to respond to aggression and oppression, and anger is an attribute of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and of his illustrious *Sahābah* (Companions).

This is how our emotions surrender to the Will of Allāh ﷻ and become a 'Muslim'. It is equally important for a Muslim who has surrendered to the Will and Choice of Allāh ﷻ, that one fulfils the due rights and responsibilities of those that one is obliged to do so, as commanded by Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ.

[68] Sahīh al-Muslim, Kitāb al-Zakāh.

Gratitude in all circumstances

In complying with the Qur'ān and Hadīth, a believer needs to understand that as our body is an '*amānah*' (trust) given to us, then it is part and parcel of expressing our gratitude to Allāh ﷻ that we have complete trust and reliance in Allāh ﷻ, regardless of our predicament, whether we are in a state of comfort or discomfort, in peace or war. It is imperative for us to accept that this life is a test from Allāh ﷻ, there is accountability and we will be returning to Him! Allāh ﷻ Himself says,

> *'What?! Did you think that We had created you in vain and that you shall not return to Us?'(18:115)*
>
> *'And We will most certainly test you with somewhat of fear, and hunger, and loss of wealth, and lives and fruits, and give good news to the patient.' (2:155)*
>
> *He ﷻ further stipulates elsewhere in the Qur'ān,*
>
> *'Do men think that they will be left by (simply) saying that we have believed, and they will not be tried?' (40:2)*
>
> *'And certainly we tested those before them, so Allāh will certainly see those who are true (in faith) and certainly see the liars(in faith).' (40:3)*

We are in this life in one of two states, either in ease or discomfort. If we are in ease and are in receipt of the favours and blessings of Allāh ﷻ, then it is essential for us to express our gratitude to Allāh ﷻ who is the ultimate

cause for us in possessing these blessings, and this is in direct compliance with many verses of the Qur'ān:

> *'And be grateful of the blessing of Allāh if it is indeed Him you worship.'(16:114)*
>
> *'So remember the blessings of Allāh, so that you may perhaps prosper.' (7:69)*
>
> *'Be grateful to Me and do not be ungrateful to Me'.* (2:152)

Further, to obey Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ with each and every limb is also a way of demonstrating gratitude to Allāh ﷻ with our limbs and disobedience is ingratitude.

Conversely, if we are in a state of hardship or difficulty, then we must exercise and adopt patience (*Sabr*) and perseverance, and turn to our Allāh ﷻ in prayer and in supplication, as would our Master, the ultimate guide, Muhammad ﷺ. We should supplicate for ease, firmness and stability and seek His forgiveness.

Suicide

It is absolutely impermissible for us being a 'Muslim' - someone who has surrendered his will and choice to his Maker, Allāh ﷻ to commit suicide; as this is an evident demonstration of the absence of trust and conviction in Allāh ﷻ. Allāh ﷻ states in the Qur'ān:

'And cast not yourselves towards destruction.' (2:195)

'And kill not yourselves.' (4:29)

Many warnings of punishments have also been stipulated in the Hadīths. May Allāh ﷻ protect us from such disobedience, āmīn. In short, suicide is never the solution.

It is like jumping out of the pan onto the direct flame. It is mentioned in the Hadīth, that the one who commits suicide will continue this act of committing suicide in Hell until Judgement Day.

We need to remember that there is always light at the end of the tunnel, the day always follows the night, there will be ease after discomfort, and there are and always will be people in this world, who are in a much worse situation, yet they are persevering and demonstrating *Sabr*! A Muslim should never despair, as this is a mark of disbelievers.

'And despair not of Allāh's Mercy; surely, no one despairs of the Mercy of Allāh except the unbelieving people'. (12:87)

Hence, a Muslim should always be optimistic and not pessimistic.

Predestination

Both, good and evil are (creations) of Allāh ﷻ, this is our belief. Our destiny is pre-written on the Protected Tablet (*Lawh Mahfūz*).

In short, Allāh ﷻ being the 'all-Knowing' with His Infinite, Complete and Unlimited Knowledge has written and knows what we are going to do in our life. Simultaneously, we are not absolutely compelled to do everything; rather, we have been given the free will and independence to select our actions.

He has given us the potential to choose the path we desire, whether it is good or evil, for which we will be held to account in the Hereafter.

He, being the all-Knowing, wrote what we would choose, but according to the Hadīths of our Master ﷺ, we should strive to establish virtues and good deeds, as we do not know what Allāh ﷻ has written.

He is the Most Just, and is not unfair at all! All our deeds are subject to our intentions. Perform good deeds with sincere intentions and you will attain reward, as injustice is impossible for Allāh ﷻ .

One should therefore always believe that each and every one of our actions, whether verbal or physical, internal or external are registered for accountability, even if they are

within the body such as jealousy, hatred, hypocrisy, arrogance, pride and suspicion; all are known by Allāh ﷻ.

'And certainly Allāh is the Knower of the hidden secrets of the chests.' (3:154)

His Infinite Knowledge knows whatever we think, imagine, intend and plan.

'O our Lord, undoubtedly you know what we conceal and what we disclose. And nothing is hidden from Allāh in the earth or in the heavens.' (14:38)

Consequently, our Master ﷺ, the teacher of all creation has advised us to worship Allāh ﷻ as though we are seeing Him.[69]

We should have profound conviction that we are always in His Supreme Court, when we perform actions, we should do them with the belief that He is watching them. We should fear Him with the conviction that He is watching us.

Thus, adopting such an approach will not result in sin, knowing that our Owner is watching what we do, and this will demonstrate the submission of the entire body, as remember, we are His Servants;

''Abd Allāh', and not ''Abd al-Nafs' (the servant of our evil desire. As we have submitted ourselves 'to Him', we will

[69] Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Īmān.

be obedient to His Will and Choice and not to the will and choice of our desires!

Accountability

When one believes that even the sins committed within the heart, such as jealousy, arrogance, being ostentatious, narcissism and hatred are even within Allāh's ﷻ Supreme and Infinite Knowledge, as these are done in the absence of the knowledge of the public, then he will endeavor to distance himself even from these destructive sins.

'Then whosoever will have done good of an atom's weight, shall see it. And whosoever will have done evil of an atom's weight, shall see it.' (99:7-8).

So, respectable readers, even the smallest of sins or virtues are registered and there is accountability. Bearing this in mind the 'Muslim' body should endeavor to abstain from all sins, regardless of whether they are minor or major. And perform every good deed, in order to attain reward and the ultimate gift; the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ.

In addition to fulfilling the due rights and obligations of Allāh ﷻ (Huqūq Allāh), the rights of the servants must also be fulfilled.

The due rights of Allāh ﷻ upon His servants are: to bear witness that only He ﷻ is our God, to not associate

partners with Him, to believe in Him correctly; that He is free from all imperfections, to believe in His Prophet ﷺ correctly.

To establish Salāh, to pay Zakāh, to fast in (the whole of) Ramadān, to perform Hajj once in a lifetime if we are capable, both financially and physically, and to be obedient to 'His Commands'. In a nutshell, to believe and obey as the Companions of our Beloved Prophet ﷺ did.

The due rights of the people (*Huqūq al-'Ibād*) include (i) the rights of our parents, to always honour and love them, if they are old and weak, to serve them physically and financially (ii) to support and help our brothers and sisters, including our neighbours (iii) to provide our children with good names, Islamic manners and etiquettes, to teach them about Islām, the Qur'ān, the love and reverence of our Prophet ﷺ, the love of his blessed family, to bring them up in an Islamic environment, to strive to protect them from the fire of Hell.

Allāh ﷻ is the One Who provided us with the gift of life, and all the blessings we enjoy therein. We are immensely indebted to Him and can never repay Him for even a single favour or blessing.

The air that we breathe, the countless variety of food and drinks that we enjoy, each and every limb of our body is a blessing and favour of Allāh ﷻ. Yet, we continue to rebel and disobey Him, and succumb to Shaytān.

One way of attempting to express our gratitude to our Creator ﷻ is to strive to obey Him and never disobey Him, as the Qur'anic verse instructs,

> *'And be grateful to Me, and do not be ungrateful to Me.'* (2:152)

The other factor that can prevent one from living a life of sin and disobedience is to fear accountability in His Majestic Court and to fear His punishment and divine wrath. Indeed there is no punishment like the punishment and wrath of Allāh ﷻ.

Our Creator and Owner, Allāh ﷻ, has stipulated in the Qur'ān:

> *'And I did not create Jinn and Humans except for My Worship.'* (51:56)

> *'And He is the One Who created death and life so that He tests you, whom amongst you is the best in deeds.'* (67:2)

Worship is not restricted to Salāh and *Dhikr*, it includes living as a practicing Muslim, by following the example of our Beloved, our Master ﷺ. This can only be achieved by education - by learning all those rulings which are mandatory for us and the sacred sayings and *Sīrah* of our Master ﷺ.

The worthlessness of this world

In relation to this world, our Beloved Prophet ﷺ says that the love of this world is the root of all evils.[70]

In stipulating the worthlessness of this world, he ﷺ says,

'If this world (even) held the value of the wing of a mosquito according to Allāh, then He wouldn't allow a disbeliever (i.e. a *Kāfir*) to even drink a sip from it.'[71]

In another Hadīth it is stated,

> *'Beware, surely the Dunyā is cursed and the things therein are accursed, except the Dhikr (Remembrance of Allāh) and that which He (Allāh) holds dear and the Islamic scholar ('Ālim) and the student of Islamic knowledge.'*[72]

We are yet further reminded that this world (worldly life) is a prison for the believer and paradise for a kāfir (disbeliever).[73]

The best person according to our Prophet ﷺ is the one who has a long life in conjunction with virtuous deeds, when he ﷺ was questioned, 'Who is the most evil?' He ﷺ replied,' The one who has a long life coupled with evil deeds.'[74]

[70] Bayhaqī, Shu'ab al-Īmān.
[71] Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Zuhd.
[72] Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Hadīth no. 2322.
[73] Sahīh al-Muslim, Kitāb al-Zuhd wa al-Raqā'iq.
[74] Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Zuhd.

In conjunction with striving to perform virtuous deeds, one should endeavour to perfect one's character, as our Master ﷺ has stated,

'The one(s) with the most complete Īmān from the believers are the ones whose character is the best.'[75]

He ﷺ advises us to live this life as a traveller, 'Be in this world as though you are a stranger or traveller.'[76]

He ﷺ further guides us,

> *'When you are in the evening then do not wait for the morning, and when you are in your morning, then do not wait for the evening, and prepare and accumulate (reward) by doing good deeds, whilst being in good health, for your illness, and (prepare) with your life for your death.'*[77]

Such beautiful advice bestowed by the city of knowledge and wisdom; our Beloved Prophet ﷺ, for his followers. Surely we should take heed from it, as the pleasures of this world are temporary and the ultimate reward and success is of the Hereafter.

[75] Sunan Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Sunnah.
[76] Sahīh al-Bukhārī (40 Hadīths of al-Nawawī).
[77] Sahīh al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Riqāq.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one can undoubtedly, with the Grace of Allāh ﷻ and the blessings of His Prophet ﷺ, become a 'better' Muslim, by firstly learning the necessary knowledge required, the due rights of Allāh ﷻ and the due rights of people upon us, and then implementing them, by constantly reminding ourselves that our submission is to Allāh ﷻ and Allāh ﷻ alone.

We have surrendered to Him. Our choice is therefore, His choice. Our welfare and betterment both in the life of this world and in the Hereafter is totally and unconditionally in surrendering to His Will and Choice.

He is the One Who has bestowed to us the gift of this life and the infinite blessings and favours that we enjoy and utilise in our daily life, as the Qur'ān reminds us,

> *'And He gave you everything of what you asked him, and if you count the blessings of Allāh, you will never be able to number them.'* (14:34)

So we must ask ourselves the question, why do we obey Shaytān? The one who is our blatant enemy and desires our destruction! As the Qur'ān warns us, 'And do not follow the footsteps of Shaytān, he is surely your blatant enemy.'(2:208)

Dearest Muslims, nothing is worth jeopardising our Paradise, whether it is indulging in a sin or unlawful

luxury! Beware, the enjoyment of the sin is momentary but its effects and punishment maybe everlasting. Conversely, striving to establish virtues maybe difficult and strenuous, but the reward with Allāh ﷻ is eternal! Let's not jeopardise the eternal for the provisional.

The ultimate objective for a Muslim is to attain the pleasure of Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ. And this is even greater than Paradise. Paradise will be bestowed to every Muslim and is his destination by virtue of the Grace of Allāh ﷻ.

It is a place where in the Muslims will receive pleasures and luxuries beyond their imagination and not provisionally, but eternally.

A place which Allāh ﷻ has created for His righteous servants; which no eye has seen and no ear has heard and nor has any heart ever felt its comprehension.[78] A place where in there is infinite pleasure in conjunction with an eternal life without any kind of pain, suffering or illness.

Also, as Muslims we need to be aware that kufr, shirk, misguidance and the disobedience of Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ leads to Hellfire; which is a place ultimately created for the disbelievers. Where in there is unimaginable punishment, pain and suffering.

Let me remind you, to deny the existence of Jannah (Paradise) and Jahannam (Hell), is kufr. The fire of this

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[78] Sahīh Muslim, Kitāb al-Tafsīr and al-Jannah.

world is only one part of the seventy parts of the Hellfire, in terms of the intensity of the fire.[79]

Further, our Master ﷺ has warned us,'In Hell there will be some people who are engulfed in the Hellfire till their ankles. And there will be some who are engulfed till their thighs. And there will be some who are engulfed till their waists. And there will be some who are engulfed till their necks.'[80] May Allāh ﷻ protect us from the punishment of the Hellfire and from His disobedience and displeasure.

The ultimate success lies in following the ways and example of our Master, the Beloved of Allāh ﷻ, the ultimate worshipper of Allāh ﷻ and the perfect human being; Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ. Following his flawless prophetic sunnah with the most profound love and reverence embedded in one's heart will not only lead to becoming the beloved of Rasulullah ﷺ, but also the beloved of Allāh ﷻ. The Qur'ān substantiates this,

> *'Say O Beloved, "(O) people! If you love Allāh, then follow me, (only then)* ***Allāh will love you****, and forgive your faults."'* (3:31)

However, this can only be achieved by first, learning the Dīn and the prophetic sunnahs and only from the Sahīh al-'Aqīdah (Sunni) scholars.

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[79] Bahār-e-Sharī'at.

[80] Sahīh Muslim, Kitāb al-Jannah.

Otherwise you will be very near and yet so far from your destination. We must be extremely cautious from whom we take our Dīn as highlighted by our Master ﷺ, 'Undoubtedly, this knowledge is Dīn (Islām) so ponder (carefully) from whom you take your Dīn.'[81]

There is nothing more important than the reverence and love for our Nabī ﷺ! As this is the essence of Īman and Islām, in conjunction with absolute loyalty, servitude and obedience to him.

This is ultimately obedience and servitude to Allāh ﷻ and is the height of guidance, in fact, in their absence there is no guidance or faith. This was beautifully demonstrated in the cave of Thawr by the one declared as the greatest after the Prophets; Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Siddīq, may Allāh be pleased with him, when he almost sacrificed his precious life for the comfort, welfare and sleep of his Master.[82] And by the one, declared as the Door of knowledge, the fourth Caliph and son-in-law of our Nabī ﷺ; Sayyidunā 'Alī, may Allāh be pleased with him, when he sacrificed his Salāh for the comfort and sleep of his Nabī ﷺ.[83]

Their noble actions demonstrate loyalty, love and obedience of the highest order to Allāh ﷻ and His Beloved

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[81] Sahīh Muslim, al-Muqaddimah.

[82] Mishkāh al-Masābīh, volume 4, Hadīth no. 6034.

[83] Mu'jam al-Kabīr,Tabarānī.

ﷺ, and this is the criterion of Īmān according to the Qur'ān and Hadīth.

These actions inspired our great Imām, A'lā Hadrat, Imām Ahmad Razā, may Allāh have mercy upon him, the matchless devotee of our Nabī ﷺ to proclaim,

'Thabit hua jumla faraiz furu hain,
asl ul usul bandagi us tajwar ki hain.'

This establishes that all obligations are subsidiary and the root of all obligations is servitude to our Master ﷺ.

We often hear some people say 'live life to the fullest!' Meaning, have no limits or boundaries, don't hold back, do every sin you can think of and fulfil your desires regardless of whether it is permissible or not according to Islām.

This is the height of ignorance and insolence. And the path which will inevitably lead to one's destruction! I agree, one should live life to the fullest! Not by living like a wild animal but, by fully submitting your whole life to Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ, by observing their commands and perfectly flawless teachings.

Complete submission also entails that we are both inwardly and outwardly a Muslim, so that our appearance is also a Muslim!

Meaning, if we are a male, then we grow a full beard according to the Sunnah (length being a fist from beneath

the chin) ruling being wājib[84], and we dress modestly observing 'sitr al- awrah' covering of the necessary parts; that is for females, covering properly the entire body with the exceptions of the hands, feet and face, this is not only compliance with the Sharī'ah, it further protects them from being a prey of the eyes of the opposite gender!

And from the navel to the knees for males and to further dress in such a way, so that our clothes are loose and not transparent.

We enjoy Allāh's ﷻ given blessings and sustenance, His given life, we live in His dominion, breathing his air and yet we accept the invitation of the devil?!

Let us repent with complete sincerity and strive to always obey Allāh ﷻ and His Messenger ﷺ.

To conclude, in order for us to be a better Muslim, we must firstly educate ourselves with the Islamic knowledge required, to enable us to protect our Īmān and actions from heretics, learn all the knowledge required to complete our *Fara'id*, *Wājibāt* and *Sunan*; namely, the essentials of Islām.

Once we live the life in which we are obedient to Allāh ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ, then we will undoubtedly be a better 'Muslim', and we fear their disobedience, as the Glorious Qur'ān proclaims, 'And whoever obeys Allāh and His

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[84] Fath al-Qadīr, Durr al-Mukhtar, Fatāwā Ridawiyyah (volume 6,21,22,23).

Prophet (ﷺ) has indeed achieved an immense success.' (33:71). Only then will our life be constructive worship.

If you believe that this book has helped you or made you into a better Muslim, then do remember the sinful author in your pious Du'ās and pray to Allāh ﷻ that He forgives me, my parents, my Shuyūkh, and my family and friends without accountability, āmīn.

About the Author

Muhammad Naveed Ashrafī, son of al-Hāj Choudhry Muhammd Sādiq Ashrafī was born in the United Kingdom. He completed Hifz at an early age and studied A-Levels at Blackburn College. Thereafter, he studied Law LLB (hons) at the University of Central Lancashire.

After graduating as a Lawyer, he started studying Dars al-Nizāmī and graduated in 2001. Thereafter, he was honoured and bestowed with Ijāzah (permission) and Khilāfah of the Qadirī Chishtī Ashrafī order from his Shaykh; Huzoor Shaykh al-Islām 'Allāmah Sayyid Muhammad Madanī Mīyān al-Ashrafi al-Jilānī, may Allāh protect him.

Also, he travelled to Cairo (Egypt) and Pakistan to study the Arabic language. He has been serving the Dīn since then; through delivering lectures throughout the United Kingdom as well as overseas.

He used to regularly appear on Ummah Channel in the U.K. He is always available to serve Deen and to defend the supreme honour of Allāh ﷻ and our Master, the Holy Prophet ﷺ through refutations and rebuttals in his lectures, and strives to deliver the correct, original and authentic Islām by removing extremist ideologies and instilling the love of Allāh ﷻ, our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his Companions and Ahl al-Bayt in the hearts of the Muslims.

Glossary

Āmīn: Recited at the end of a prayer, for its fulfilment.

Ahādīth: (Plural of Hadīth) Sayings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Ahl al Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah: Muslims who believe in Islām as taught by the Prophet ﷺ. They hold fast to the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and of the Holy Companions.

Alhamdulillāh: Arabic for 'All praise due to Allāh'

Allāh: The personal name of God.

'Aqīdah: Basic beliefs and principles.

Awliyā' Allāh: The Friends of Allāh ﷻ.

Dīn: The way of life; religion.

Fard: Compulsary; actions that are incumbent upon a Muslim.

Fatwā: (Plural: Fatāwā) Religious verdict; injunction.

Fitnah: Mischief.

Hadīth: (Plural: Ahādīth) Sayings and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Hafiz: One who has memorised the entire Qur'ān by heart.

Hajj: The holy pilgrimage to Makkah in the month of Dhul Hijjah, the 5th pillar of Islām, an obligation upon every able Muslim to fulfil, at least once in his or her lifetime.

Halāl: That which is permissible in Islām.

Hanafī: One of the four schools of thought of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, as established by Imām Abū Hanīfah, one of the greatest Muslim scholars and jurists.

Harām: That which is forbidden in Islām.

Īmān: Unshakeable faith; to believe in the Oneness of Allāh through the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and to believe that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is the final Prophet of Allāh ﷻ, and to believe in everything that he has brought.

In Shā Allāh: 'Allāh willing'; recited by Muslims whenever something is to be undertaken in the future.

Islām: Means: 'submission', to surrender oneself to Allāh ﷻ.

Ka'bah: The house of Allāh ﷻ, in Makkah, Saudi Arabia).

Kāfir: (Plural: Kuffār) Disbeliever.

Kalimah: The declaration of faith.

Khalifah: Caliph, deputy, representative.

Khātam al-Nabiyyīn: Seal of the Prophets; title of the Final Prophet of Allāh, Muhammad ﷺ.

Kufr: Disbelief.

Madīnah al-Munawwarah: The second holiest city of Islām and the resting place of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The holy place in which the heart of every Muslim resides.

Makkah al-Mukarramah: A city in Saudi Arabia, the holiest city of Islām. The birthplace of our Beloved Prophet ﷺ.

Masjid: (Plural: Masājid) Place of worship for Muslims.

Maslak: School of thought/path.

Mu'min: (plural: Mu'minīn) Believer; one who has complete faith in Islām and practices it with strict punctuality.

Muhammad ﷺ: The personal name of the Final Prophet and Messenger of Allāh ﷻ. The name 'Muhammad' literally means'One who is overwhelmingly praised.'

Mushrik: Polytheist.

Nabī: A Prophet, one who informs of the information of

the unseen or of the future, through revelation from Allāh ﷻ.

Nūr: Light.

Qādiānī: One who believes in Mirza Ghulām Ahmad Qadiānī as a prophet and is hence a disbeliever.

Qārī: (plural: Qurrā') Reciter of the Holy Qur'ān.

Qur'ān: The book of divine guidance, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Rasūl: Allāh's messenger.

Rasūlullāh: The Messenger of Allāh, Muhammad ﷺ

Sahābah: The Holy Companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Salāh: The five daily obligatory prayers.

Sharī'ah: Islamic jurisprudence and laws.

Shaytān: Satan.

Shī'ah: A deviant sect, which has beliefs contrary to the pristine religion of Islām.

Sunnah: The way of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his Companions.

Sūrah: (Plural: Suwar) A chapter of the Holy Qur'ān.

Tafdīlī: A misguided sect of the Shī'ahs.

Tahārah: State of external purity.

Talaq: Divorce.

Tasawwuf: The spiritual aspect of Islām.

Tawhīd: The Oneness of Allāh ﷻ.

Ummah: Believers of Islām, the faithful followers of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Wahhābī: A misguided follower of Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb Najdī.

Wudū: Ablution performed with water to begin an act of worship.

Zakāh: Obligatory charity, one of the five pillars of Islām.

I would like to say that I am very grateful and honoured to have been chosen by Hazrat Mawlānā Naveed Ashrafī Sāhib to check through this book, I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and was often fond of the unique style of the writer. I believe it is indeed true to its words, that it does, in actual fact, show one 'How to be a better Muslim' through the details and explanation provided. I pray to Allāh ﷻ through the Wasīlah of His Beloved ﷺ that those who read this do in fact benefit from it, so much so, that one actually becomes a better Muslim.

Mawlana Haider Ali